



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201
T: (413) 442-1521 · F: (413) 442-1523
TTY: 771 or (800) 439-2370
berkshireplanning.org

MEETING NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of the
BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Thursday, February 1, 2024 at **4:00 p.m.**

This will be a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023 extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until March 31, 2025.

To participate virtually join the Zoom meeting at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84716166729>

Meeting id: 847 1616 6729, Phone: 646.558.8656, 646 931 3860, 312.626.6799, 301 715 8592

Meeting materials are on BRPC's website: www.berkshireplanning.org. Click the calendar of events, then the meeting name, and follow the link to materials.

AGENDA

(all times approximate)

- I. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement (4:00)
- II. Roll Call of Executive Committee Members Attending the Meeting
- III. Vote to Approve Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of January 4, 2024* (4:05)
- IV. Financial Reports (4:10)
 - A. Vote to Approve the December 28, 2023, to January 23*, 2024, Expenditures Report*
 - B. Report on the Accounts Receivable/ Assessments – January 2024
 - C. Report on the Line of Credit
- V. Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternate Delegates (4:15)
- VI. Items Requiring Action* (4:20)
 - A. Vote to authorize (after the fact) the Executive Director to sign any contracts and agreements with Berkshire Community College related to the BERK12 Mohawk Trail Regional School District project*
 - B. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) Program in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
 - C. Vote to Approve Submission of a Grant Application to the US Department of Transportation (DOT) – RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) program *

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, MGL c. 30A, §§ 18-25.

Please Note:

For information regarding postponements or cancellations on the day of a scheduled meeting, please call Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at (413) 442-1521, x5

- D. Vote to Approve Submission of Comments in Response to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Request for Comments on the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Review and Stakeholder Questions*
 - E. Vote to Approve Submission of Comments to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy of the Massachusetts General Court regarding Several Legislative Bills Related to Solar Development and Regulation*
 - VII. Committee Reports and Discussion (4:40)
 - A. Commission Development Committee
 - B. Municipal Planning Organization (MPO)
 - C. Berkshire Brownfields Committee
 - D. Regional Issues Committee
 - E. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee
 - VIII. Executive Director's Report (4:45)
 - A. Report on New Contracts / Agreements
 - B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update
 - C. Staff Updates
 - D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update
 - E. Passenger Rail
 - F. Select Board Handbook
 - G. Municipal Empowerment Act
 - H. Housing Bond Bill
 - I. MMA Western and Rural Mass Conference
 - IX. Old Business (4:50)
 - A. None
 - X. New Business (4:50)
 - A. Discussion about the March Commission Meeting
 - XI. Adjournment (5:00)
- Attachments:
- Unapproved Minutes of the January 4, 2024, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
 - December 28, 2023, to January 23, 2024, Expenditures Report
 - Accounts Receivable Report – January 2024
 - Line of Credit Report
 - Executive Director's Memorandum
 - Unapproved Minutes of the January 4, 2024 Commission Development Committee Meeting
 - Unapproved Minutes of the January 9, 2024 Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting
 - Massachusetts Select Board Association's announcement of the Select Board Handbook
 - Municipal Empowerment Act Summary
 - Affordable Homes Act Summary
 - Affordable Homes Act Testimony
 - December 2023 Technical Assistance Memo
- * Items Requiring Action



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DRAFT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023 extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until March 31, 2025.

I. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement

Chair Malcolm Fick called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. as a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023 extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until March 31, 2025. He stated that BRPC was recording the meeting, and anyone else who wanted to record it needed to inform him.

II. Roll Call:

Read by Office Administrator Kate Hill Tapia:

Malcolm Fick, Chair, Gt Barrington Alternate

John Duval, Vice-Chair, Adams Alternate – a little late

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate

Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Lee Delegate

Doug McNally, Commission Development Committee, Chair, Windsor Delegate

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate

Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate

Kyle Hanlon, At-large, North Adams Delegate,

Sam Haupt, At-Large, Peru Delegate

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director; Marianne Snizek, Office Manager; Kate Hill Tapia, Office Administrator; Laura Brennan, Assistant Director, and Economic Development Program Manager; Jaymie Rubin Zapata, Public Health Senior Planner

Others: Jonathan James, New Marlborough, Delegate; James – Citizen 84 North Pl Rd; Mayor Peter Marchetti; Justine Dodds, Pittsfield, Alternate

III. Approval of December 7, 2023 Minutes

Doug McNally moved to approve the December 7, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Roger Bolton and approved by a roll call vote from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, and Sam Haupt.

IV. Financial Reports

A. December 1 to 27, 2023 Expenditures Report

Sam Haupt moved to accept the report as presented, and Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. A roll vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

B. Accounts Receivable Report December 2023

There are no problematic receivables.

C. Line of Credit Report

It has not been used.

V. Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates

None.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to Approve Changes to the BRPC Personal, Family, and Medical Leave Policy to Allow for a Paid Leave Option

The Executive Committee was requested to approve changes to the BRPC Personal, Family, and Medical Leave Policy to allow for up to a 12-week paid leave option for employees who have worked at BRPC for at least one year. Effective January 1, 2024.

To qualify, employees must use any short or long-term disability benefit, sick leave, compensatory time, holiday, or floating holiday time, and all but 35 hours of vacation time.

Another proposed change is adding a negative sick leave balance of up to 35 hours to employees who have used their sick leave.

These changes are proposed so BRPC remains competitive without the bureaucratic requirements and additional costs to the employees and the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Act agency.

Doug McNally motioned to approve the BRPC Personal, Family, and Medical Leave Policy changes to allow for a paid leave option, effective January 1, 2024. Sheila Irvin seconded it. A roll vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

B. Vote to Approve Submission of a Grant Application to the Rural Health Network Development Planning Program in the Health Resources and Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a Rural Health Network Planning grant application and sign any

resulting contracts and agreements to the Health Resources and Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. The Program aims to plan and develop integrated healthcare networks that collaborate to achieve efficiencies, expand access to and improve the quality of basic healthcare services and outcomes, and strengthen the rural healthcare system. This program supports one year of planning and brings together members of the health care delivery system, particularly those entities that may not have collaborated in the past, to establish and/or improve local capacity to strengthen rural community health interventions and enhance care coordination. The grant is for up to \$100,000 and does not require a BRPC match. There may be subcontractors. [Laura Kittross](#), Public Health Program Manager, is the BRPC contact.

Doug McNally motioned to approve the Rural Health Network Planning grant application and sign any resulting contracts and agreements to the Health Resources and Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. Kyle Hanlon seconded it. A roll vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

C. Vote to Approve Entering into a Contract with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council Related to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation MassTrails Grant Program

The Executive Committee was requested (after the fact) to authorize the Executive Director to sign any contracts and agreements with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council related to its Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation MassTrails grant program. Through this grant, BRPC will work with other regional planning agencies and state partners to finalize the design of a statewide GIS trail standard, such as defining what a trail is. The grant runs through June 15, 2024. This grant would provide \$8,000 in funding, with \$2,000 in-kind match required. [Mark Maloy](#) is the BRPC contact.

Sam Haupt motioned to authorize the Executive Director to sign any contracts and agreements with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council related to its Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation MassTrails grant program. Roger Bolton seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

Tom announced that the berkshiresoutside.org website is up and running and encouraged everyone to use it.

VII. Committee Reports and Discussion

A. Regional Issues Committee

The committee met on December 13, 2023 and discussed the Draft Report of the Clean Energy Transmission Working Group (CETWG). Comments were due by December 15, 2023. A copy of the comments is in this meeting's

packet and emphasizes local input via hearings and the use of existing corridors and lines. Minutes were not yet available.

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on December 14, 2023 and approved the FY 2023 Audit. A Summary of the Auditor's Results, Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances, and the Audit Management Letter is attached. The minor recommendations have been implemented. Chair Buck Donovan complimented Marianne and her team on a great job. The Committee also discussed and reviewed a draft Investment Policy. The next meeting has been proposed for May 2024 about the FY 2025 budget. Draft unapproved minutes were in the packet.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 12/1/2023 to 12/27/2023.

- Richmond – Economic Development Planner - \$10,000
- Department of Energy Resources - Regional Energy Plan Assistance - \$66,350
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council - Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council - Equity in Emergency Management - \$9,950
- Communities/Organizations - Cultural Districts - ArtWeek Berkshires - \$20,000
- New England Rural Health Association – Root Cause Equity in Heat Emergencies - \$30,000
- Lanesborough – Master Plan - \$10,000

Grants and Contracts not received.

We are not aware of any grants that have not been received.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI)

The BTI Board approved accepting \$15,000 from Mill Town Foundation to support the Berkshire Benchmarks initiative, which will provide staffing for BRPC and cover the cost of the Berkshire Benchmarks website. The BTI President was authorized to sign any contracts. The funding will be from January 1 to December 31, 2024.

C. Staff Update

- Accepted Positions:
 - Jocelyn Latvalla - Economic Development Program Associate – Focus on digital equity; starts January 9.
- Open Positions:
 - Internships - Outdoor Recreation and Arts & Culture Planning
 - Public Health Nurse -Health Educator
 - Senior Planner – Housing

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission did not meet in December 2023. The

next meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2024.

E. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail – BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced that up to \$500,000 has been awarded to the Rail and Transit Division through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID) to support planning for additional train service connecting Boston and Albany, New York through Springfield, and Pittsfield. This corridor would provide up to eight daily round-trip passenger trains on an existing alignment owned by CSX Transportation. Amtrak's once-daily long-distance Lake Shore Limited is the only passenger service on this corridor.

The Corridor ID Program is a comprehensive intercity passenger rail planning and development program that will help guide intercity passenger rail development throughout the country and creates a pipeline of intercity passenger rail projects ready for implementation and funding through FRA's Federal-State Partnership-National Network Program.

- Berkshire Flyer - There was no known activity over the last month.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – There was no known activity over the last month.

F. Farmland Action Plan

In December, the Healey-Driscoll Administration released the [Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan](#), a long-range strategic initiative to address Massachusetts' farmland needs. The plan sets goals and priorities around increasing farmland conservation and protection, addressing farmland access, and preserving and expanding farms' economic and environmental viability across the state.

G. Economic Development Plan

The Healey administration released the state's economic development plan, [Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations](#). The plan reflects a vision for Massachusetts organized around three main priority areas:

- Fundamentals: Investing in the fundamentals to enable economic growth
- Talent: Retaining and attracting the world's best talent across all backgrounds
- Sectors: Supporting businesses that power the state's economy

It was agreed that this would be a good topic for a Commission meeting.

H. Blueprint: Building the Foundation for Recovery

For the past 18 months, the Public Health Program has worked with others on

reducing opioid overdoses. Partners from across the Berkshires joined together in the HEALing Communities Study to increase naloxone distribution, raise awareness of all pathways to treatment and recovery, and reduce stigma around substance use disorder.

Blueprint is a documentary film where members of the Berkshire community share their recovery stories. The thirty-minute film is available at [Blueprint: Building the Foundation for Recovery](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) (youtube.com).

I. Housing Bond Bill

On October 18, 2023, Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll unveiled the [Housing Bond Bill or the Affordable Homes Act](#) (H. 4138), a comprehensive bill to create smart housing and invest in livable communities. Tom encouraged Commission members to participate in a hearing about it on January 18, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. [at the State House](#).

VIII. Old Business

A. Comments on the Massachusetts Internet for All Plan

At the December meeting, the Executive Committee approved a set of comments to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute on the Massachusetts Internet for All Plan. The Committee also approved submitting a second set of comments on the implementation portion of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) plan. The comments due December 15 are in the meeting's materials. The plan can be accessed at [Massachusetts Internet for All Plan | MBI \(masstech.org\)](#).

IX. New Business

A. January 18 Commission Meeting

A presentation on the Economic Development Plan was chosen as the main topic for January, along with a review of the [BerkshiresOutside.org](#) website and maybe a discussion about micro-transit.

Potential topics previously mentioned include:

- Presentation of ResilientMass Plan
- Presentation on Recommendation of the Climate Chief
- Presentation on the meaning of environmental justice communities

X. Adjournment

Roger Bolton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m., seconded by Kyle Hanlon, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote:

Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, and Sam Haupt.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of the December 7, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting
- December 1, 2023, to December 27, 2023, Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Report – December 2023
- Line of Credit Report

- Executive Director's Memorandum
- BRPC Personal, Family, and Medical Leave Policy draft
- Clean Energy Transmission Working Group Draft Report Comments
- FY2023 Summary of the Auditor's Results,
- FY2023 Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances
- FY2023 Audit Management Letter
- Unapproved Minutes of the December 14, 2023 BRPC Finance Committee Meeting
- Jocelyn Latvalla Resume
- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) comments
- November Technical Assistance Memo
- October Technical Assistance Memo Revised

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Check Register

For the Period From Dec 28, 2023 to Jan 23, 2024

Filter Criteria includes: Report order is by Date.

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount	Department	Department Description	Expense
17705	12/31/23	ADELSON & COMPANY PC	9,500.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Audit Services
17706	12/31/23	SARAH DEJESUS	915.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17707	12/31/23	FULL CIRCLE TECHNOLOGIES INC	46,000.00	682 NEHA-FDA/FSOP	NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding - Capacity Building - Alliance Food Safety Program Online Permitting	Subcontractor
17708	12/31/23	FULL CIRCLE TECHNOLOGIES INC	4,000.00	722 EOAF/OP23	Executive Office for Administration & Finance - Online Permitting Upgrade	Subcontractor
17709	12/31/23	GEMINI CREATIVE LLC	22,767.00	690 DCR/OUTRECWEB	Department of Conservation and Recreation - Outdoor Recreation Website	Subcontractor
17710	12/31/23	SIOGA CLUB OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY INC	45.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17711	12/31/23	WYLIE GOODMAN	37.07	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17712	12/31/23	H TERRY DESIGNS LLC	1,500.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17713	12/31/23	KATHRYN HEEDER HOCKER	425.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17714	12/31/23	SAMANTHA KENDALL	457.50	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17715	12/31/23	KIDZONE CHILD CARE EDUCATIONAL CTR INC	192.00	652 DPH/SORPEC	Department of Public Health - Bureau of Substance Addiction - SOR-PEC	Subcontractor
17716	12/31/23	LAURA KITTROSS	17.03	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17717	12/31/23	MACFARLANE OFFICE PRODUCTS, INC.	911.67	040 ADMIN	Admin	Printing
17718	12/31/23	KELLIE MEISL	480.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17719	12/31/23	ANDREW OTTOSON	151.29	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17720	12/31/23	QUALPRINT	19,032.22	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Communications
17721	12/31/23	RAINBOW DISTRIBUTING COMPANY INC	28.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Water
17722	12/31/23	SERVICENET, INC	6,000.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17723	12/31/23	SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE RURAL HEALTH	1,306.25	715 USDA/RFSP	USDA - Regional Food System Partnerships Program	Subcontractor
17724	12/31/23	VALLEY GREEN SHREDDING, LLC	85.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Recycling
17725	1/1/24	BERKSHIRES TOMORROW, INC.	4,680.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Software Lease
17726	1/1/24	CITY OF PITTSFIELD	425.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Parking
17727	1/1/24	THE COOPER CENTER, LLC	8,895.18	040 ADMIN	Admin	Rent
17728	1/3/24	MARIA ARIAS	320.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17729	1/3/24	BERKSHIRE THEATRE GROUP	3,496.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17730	1/3/24	LAURA BRENNAN	192.31	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17731	1/3/24	MATTHEW BRYAN	36.68	516 FRCOG/EPP	FRCOG Emergency Preparedness Planning 2024	Expense Form

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Check #	Date	Payee	Amount	Department	Department Description	Expense
17732	1/3/24	JAMES BURNHAM	100.00	326 BURN	Online Burn Permits	Online Burn Permit System Services
17733	1/3/24	CARR HARDWARE & SUPPLY CO., INC.	4.49	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
17734	1/3/24	GABRIELLE DIMASSIMO	320.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17735	1/3/24	KAMARA FLASCHER	320.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17736	1/3/24	FULL CIRCLE TECHNOLOGIES INC	4,000.00	722 EOAF/OP23	Executive Office for Administration & Finance - Online Permitting Upgrade	Subcontractor
17737	1/3/24	WYLIE GOODMAN	395.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Staff Development - Digital Equity Conference
17738	1/3/24	CORNELIUS HOSS	43.10	545 DHCD/DLTA23	District Local Technical Assistance 2023	Expense Form
17739	1/3/24	SETH JENKINS	64.19	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17740	1/3/24	DAVID W KELLEY	1,150.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Cleaning Services
17741	1/3/24	MASS STATE BOARD OF RETIREMENT	11,435.45	---	---	Retirement
17742	1/3/24	ANDREW MCKEEVER	110.04	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17743	1/3/24	MIIA HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST	2,344.83	040 ADMIN	Admin	Dental Insurance
17744	1/3/24	MIIA HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST	59,270.49	040 ADMIN	Admin	Health Insurance
17745	1/3/24	MUTUAL OF OMAHA	714.57	040 ADMIN	Admin	Life; STD; LTD
17746	1/3/24	NEW ENGLAND NEWSPAPERS, INC	500.20	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Advertising
17747	1/3/24	RICHMOND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL	3,925.00	678 NERHA/RVE	New England Rural Health Association - Rural Vaccine Equity Initiative	Subcontractor
17748	1/3/24	SAVIDA HEALTH	2,519.15	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17749	1/3/24	SPECTRUM HEALTH SYSTEMS	4,947.59	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17750	1/3/24	TD CARD SERVICES	10,261.49	040 ADMIN	Admin	December 2023 Credit Card Payment
17751	1/3/24	WB MASON COMPANY INC	773.16	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
17752	1/10/24	ADLIB INC	1,200.00	748 MassTech/DE-FG	Massachusetts Technology Collaborative - Digital Equity Focus Group	Subcontractor
17753	1/10/24	VALERIE BIRD	407.41	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Expense Form
17754	1/10/24	BLUE 20/20	214.38	040 ADMIN	Admin	Vision Insurance
17755	1/10/24	MONASIA CEASAR	144.10	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Expense Form
17756	1/10/24	CITY OF PITTSFIELD	500.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17757	1/10/24	BRITNEY DANIALS	301.69	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17758	1/10/24	LESLIE DRAGER	60.48	284 BPHA/PHN	Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Public Health Nursing Program	Expense Form

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Check #	Date	Payee	Amount	Department	Department Description	Expense
17759	1/10/24	ELIZABETH FREEMAN CENTER INC	1,270.00	748 MassTech/DE-FG	Massachusetts Technology Collaborative - Digital Equity Focus Group	Subcontractor
17760	1/10/24	EDWARD FAHEY	270.25	283 BPHA/INSP	Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Pub	Expense Form
17761	1/10/24	GO GRAPHIX	5,000.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17762	1/10/24	DANIEL HASSETT	314.36	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Expense Form
17763	1/10/24	CHRISTIE LEWIS	248.25	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17764	1/10/24	COURTENY MOREHOUSE	104.15	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17765	1/10/24	PATRICIA MULLINS	230.20	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17766	1/10/24	ANN MARIE MUTZ	1,000.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17767	1/10/24	RAINBOW DISTRIBUTING COMPANY INC	113.41	040 ADMIN	Admin	Water
17768	1/10/24	RICHMOND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL	4,075.00	678 NERHA/RVE	New England Rural Health Association - Rural Vaccine Equity Initiative	Subcontractor
17769	1/10/24	NANCY SLATTERY	204.32	---	Varied Projects	Expense Form
17770	1/10/24	SOLDIER ON INC	1,200.00	748 MassTech/DE-FG	Massachusetts Technology Collaborative - Digital Equity Focus Group	Subcontractor
17771	1/10/24	JAZU STINE	45.85	681 NEHA-FDA/FSFA	NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding - Maintenance & Advancement Base - Alliance Food Safety Program Advancement	Expense Form
17772	1/10/24	TPX COMMUNICATIONS	1,357.89	040 ADMIN	Admin	Telephone
17773	1/10/24	JAYMIE ZAPATA	56.85	659 DPH/LHSCT	Department of Public Health - Local Health Support Covid-19 Contact Tracing	Expense Form
17774	1/17/24	BERKSHIRE BOUNTY INC	3,854.11	678 NERHA/RVE	New England Rural Health Association - Rural Vaccine Equity Initiative	Subcontractor
17775	1/17/24	FULL CIRCLE TECHNOLOGIES INC	3,200.00	722 EOAF/OP23	Executive Office for Administration & Finance - Online Permitting Upgrade	Subcontractor
17776	1/17/24	CHARLES KANIECKI	1,240.00	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Expense Form
17777	1/17/24	LITTLE FIN CREATIVE	4,500.00	720 NEA/MCLA	National Endowment for the Arts - Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	Advertising
17778	1/17/24	MASS STATE BOARD OF RETIREMENT	12,181.45	---	---	Retirement
17779	1/17/24	MUTUAL OF OMAHA	739.57	040 ADMIN	Admin	Life; STD; LTD
17780	1/17/24	ALEJANDRA BRENDA NOZYCE	320.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17781	1/17/24	THE COOPER CENTER, LLC	2,679.80	040 ADMIN	Admin	Utilities
17782	1/17/24	VALLEY GREEN SHREDDING, LLC	85.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Recycling
17783	1/17/24	BECKET FEDERATED CHURCH	3,854.11	678 NERHA/RVE	New England Rural Health Association - Rural Vaccine Equity Initiative	Subcontractor
17784	1/23/24	1BERKSHIRE	100.00	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Job Ad - Public Health Nurse Educator

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Filter Criteria includes: Report order is by Date.

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount	Department	Department Description	Expense
17785	1/23/24	BCBOHA	45.00	350 BCBOHA/SUP	Berkshire County Boards of Health Association - Support Services	Reimbursement - Member Payment for Fall Dinner
17786	1/23/24	DONOVAN O'CONNOR & DODIG, LLP	420.00	716 EPA/RLF2	Environmental Protection Agency Revolving Loan Fund 2022	Legal Services
17787	1/23/24	MACFARLANE OFFICE PRODUCTS, INC.	289.83	040 ADMIN	Admin	Printing
17788	1/23/24	MHOA	150.00	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Job Ad - Public Health Nurse Educator
17789	1/23/24	RAINBOW DISTRIBUTING COMPANY INC	28.47	040 ADMIN	Admin	Water
17790	1/23/24	ROUX ASSOCIATES INC	25,849.00	702 EPA/ASSESS	Environmental Protection Agency Assessment	Subcontractor
17791	1/23/24	ELIZABETH STRICKLER	4,116.67	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Subcontractor
17792	1/23/24	COLIN SYKES	294.38	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Expense Form
17793	1/23/24	WB MASON COMPANY INC	51.36	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
17794	1/23/24	COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL INC	3,760.00	592 DEP/319REGC	Department of Environmental Protection - 319 Regional Coordinator	Subcontractor
17795	1/23/24	PETTY CASH	74.49	040 ADMIN	Admin	Petty Cash Payment
1011	1/18/24	SEAN RILLA	17,551.25	710 CEDAC/HMLP	CEDAC - Home Modification Loan Program	Subcontractor
1200	1/18/24	GREYLOCK WORKS	438,228.93	716 EPA/RLF2	Environmental Protection Agency Revolving Loan Fund 2022	Requisition #2

Total 777,025.96

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount	Department	Department Description	Expense
CCARD	11/30/23	AMAZON.COM	103.90	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	11/30/23	AMAZON.COM	1,866.34	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	11/30/23	AMAZON.COM	95.43	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	11/30/23	AMAZON.COM	25.56	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	11/30/23	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	6.15	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Naloxone Kit Postage
CCARD	12/1/23	PERFECTGIFT.COM	893.73	---	Varied Projects	Gift Cards
CCARD	12/1/23	AMAZON.COM	35.43	646 DPH/MASSCALL3	Department of Public Health MASS CALL 3B - Substance Misuse Prevention Grant Program	Supplies
CCARD	12/1/23	META PLATFORMS INC	96.80	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Advertising

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Check Register

For the Period From Dec 28, 2023 to Jan 23, 2024

Filter Criteria includes: Report order is by Date.

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount	Department	Department Description	Expense
CCARD	12/2/23	AMAZON.COM	397.75	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	12/3/23	AMAZON.COM	0.29	040 ADMIN	Admin	Backup to Archive
CCARD	12/3/23	AMAZON.COM	54.19	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
CCARD	12/4/23	AMAZON.COM	313.69	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	12/4/23	BIG Y SUPERMARKET	250.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Gift Cards
CCARD	12/7/23	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	43.95	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Naloxone Kit Postage
CCARD	12/8/23	META PLATFORMS INC	28.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Advertising
CCARD	12/9/23	CODE42	9.99	040 ADMIN	Admin	Computer Software
CCARD	12/9/23	META PLATFORMS INC	50.00	---	Varied Projects	Advertising
CCARD	12/10/23	AMAZON.COM	42.98	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	12/11/23	STRAIGHT TALK WIRELESS	37.72	040 ADMIN	Admin	Telephone
CCARD	12/12/23	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	5.40	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Naloxone Kit Postage
CCARD	12/12/23	IS DECISIONS	1,267.58	040 ADMIN	Admin	Computer Software
CCARD	12/12/23	BJS WHOLESALE CLUB	64.21	010 GEN	General	MIIA Grant - Healthy Snacks
CCARD	12/12/23	ZOOM VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS, INC.	40.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Computer Software
CCARD	12/12/23	META PLATFORMS INC	50.00	---	Varied Projects	Advertising
CCARD	12/12/23	REPRO SYSTEMS, INC	118.50	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Communications
CCARD	12/13/23	EVENTBRITE	9.99	640 NEAETC/CRI23	New England AIDS Education & Training Center - Community Research Initiative of New England, Inc. - Hepatitis C V	HCV Event Creation Fee
CCARD	12/13/23	RECLAMATION VENTURES	129.00	440 MassDOT/TPL23	MassDOT - Transportation Planning	Training - Russo, N
CCARD	12/14/23	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	25.50	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Naloxone Kit Postage
CCARD	12/14/23	HOT HARRYS	90.95	748 MassTech/DE-FG	Massachusetts Technology Collaborative - Digital Equity Focus Group	Meals - Focus Group
CCARD	12/15/23	GOV.DOCS	45.18	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
CCARD	12/18/23	THE BERKSHIRE MUSEUM	12.75	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
CCARD	12/18/23	AMAZON.COM	45.98	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	12/19/23	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	10.80	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Naloxone Kit Postage
CCARD	12/20/23	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	6.15	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Naloxone Kit Postage

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Check Register

For the Period From Dec 28, 2023 to Jan 23, 2024

Filter Criteria includes: Report order is by Date.

<u>Check #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Department Description</u>	<u>Expense</u>
CCARD	12/20/23	MIXBOOK.COM	743.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Communications - Photovoice Booklets
CCARD	12/20/23	AMAZON.COM	124.00	653 BRPC/INSREB	BRPC Insurance Reimbursement - Covid-19	Supplies
CCARD	12/21/23	AMAZON.COM	303.85	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	12/21/23	AMAZON.COM	115.77	610 HRIA/G2G	Health Resources in Action - Grey to Green	Supplies
CCARD	12/21/23	SMARTSHEET.COM	956.25	650 DPH/SS	Public Health Excellence for Shared Services	Computer Software
CCARD	12/21/23	AMAZON.COM	40.98	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
CCARD	12/24/23	CONSTANT CONTACT, INC	81.00	040 ADMIN	Admin	Newsletter Subscription
CCARD	12/26/23	AMAZON.COM	335.72	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Supplies
CCARD	12/26/23	META PLATFORMS INC	25.10	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Advertising
CCARD	12/27/23	PERFECTGIFT.COM	640.61	725.02 MassTech/DE-SBC	Massachusetts Technology Collaborative - Municipal Digital Equity Planning Services - Southern Berkshire County	Gift Cards
CCARD	12/27/23	GOTPRINT.COM	46.36	040 ADMIN	Admin	Business Cards
CCARD	12/27/23	BITWARDEN INC	33.17	040 ADMIN	Admin	Computer Software
CCARD	12/27/23	BJS WHOLESALE CLUB	86.10	010 GEN	General	MIIA Grant - Healthy Snacks
CCARD	12/27/23	AMAZON.COM	51.89	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
CCARD	12/27/23	AMAZON.COM	8.80	040 ADMIN	Admin	Supplies
CCARD	12/28/23	REPRO SYSTEMS, INC	395.00	606 BMC/PTSFA	Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities	Communications

Total 10,261.49

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Aged Receivables

As of Jan 31, 2024

Filter Criteria includes: 1) Includes Drop Shipments. Report order is by ID. Report is pri

<u>Customer ID</u>	<u>Customer</u>	<u>Over 90 days</u>	<u>Amount Due</u>	<u>Notes</u>
283 BPHA/INSP/BKT	TOWN OF BECKET		7,796.50	
283 BPHA/INSP/WMS	TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN		1,800.00	
284 BPHA/PHN/BKT	TOWN OF BECKET		964.69	
284 BPHA/PHN/CHS	TOWN OF CHESHIRE		1,154.00	
284 BPHA/PHN/CLK	TOWN OF CLARKSBURG		767.62	
284 BPHA/PHN/DAL	TOWN OF DALTON		1,555.36	
284 BPHA/PHN/FLA	TOWN OF FLORIDA		577.50	
284 BPHA/PHN/HAN	TOWN OF HANCOCK	551.25	1,102.50	Payment being processed
284 BPHA/PHN/HIN	TOWN OF HINSDALE		785.40	
284 BPHA/PHN/NAD	CITY OF NORTH ADAMS		2,531.04	
284 BPHA/PHN/NAS	TOWN OF NEW ASHFORD		596.88	
284 BPHA/PHN/RIV	RIVER RUN APARTMENTS	200.00	400.00	Alecia H to follow up
284 BPHA/PHN/SAV	TOWN OF SAVOY		577.50	
284 BPHA/PHN/WMS	TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN	1,711.73	1,711.73	Payment being processed
284 BPHA/PHN/WST	TOWN OF WEST STOCKBRIDGE		750.00	
326/BURN/ADM	ADAMS FOREST WARDEN DEPT		115.00	
326/BURN/HIN	HINSDALE FIRE DEPARTMENT		115.00	
326/BURN/LEE	LEE FIRE DEPARTMENT		115.00	
326/BURN/NAS	TOWN OF NEW ASHFORD		115.00	
326/BURN/OTS	TOWN OF OTIS		115.00	
326/BURN/PTS	PITTSFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT		115.00	
326/BURN/SHF	TOWN OF SHEFFIELD		115.00	
326/BURN/TOL	TOLLAND VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT		115.00	
326/BURN/WMS	WILLIAMSTOWN FIRE DISTRICT		115.00	
350/BCBOHA	BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOC	2,791.07	2,791.07	Payment is on the way
440/TPL	MASSDOT#75425 - TPL		54,596.31	
493 RCH/EP	TOWN OF RICHMOND		20.00	
526 BCSO/OPIOID	BERKSHIRE COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE	12,500.00	25,000.00	Andy O to follow up
560 COMMVENPUR	COMMUNITY VENDOR PURCHASING	1,100.00	1,100.00	Christie to follow up
560 NORTHEAST PAVING	NORTHEAST PAVING		852.96	
560 NORTHERN TREE	NORTHERN TREE SERVICE		1,071.26	
560 SEALCOATING	SEALCOATING INC	523.25	2,403.74	Rebecca S to follow up

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Aged Receivables

As of Jan 31, 2024

Filter Criteria includes: 1) Includes Drop Shipments. Report order is by ID. Report is pri

<u>Customer ID</u>	<u>Customer</u>	<u>Over 90 days</u>	<u>Amount Due</u>	<u>Notes</u>
561 LEN/EDP	TOWN OF LENOX	62.50	3,575.00	Laura B to follow up
606 BMC/PTSFA	BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER		89,043.53	
640 NEATC/CRI/HCV	COMMUNITY RESEARCH INITIATIVE	4,918.94	4,918.94	Laura K to follow up
646 DPH/MASSCALLS	DEPT OF PUBLIC HEALTH - MASSCALLS		11,998.50	
652 DPH/SORPEC	DEPT OF PUBLIC HEALTH		15,816.98	
663 HVA/MCRC	HOUSATONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION	213.67	213.67	Payment is on the way
672 DHCD/HOUSE	DHCD	377.96	377.96	Tom to follow up
685 HVA/BCCCP	HOUSATONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION	4,247.73	7,403.35	Payment is on the way
691 CHS/GC	TOWN OF CHESHIRE	883.88	883.88	Sherdyl F to follow up
703 WST/GC	TOWN OF WEST STOCKBRIDGE	220.51	220.51	Sherdyl F to follow up
711 CLK/GW	TOWN OF CLARKSBURG	653.11	653.11	Courteny M to follow up
713 MON/MVPA	TOWN OF MONTEREY	6,691.68	6,691.68	Courteny M to follow up
714 LEE/HMMVP	TOWN OF LEE	12,049.81	12,049.81	Courteny M to follow up
731 SND/GC	TOWN OF SANDSFIELD	1,408.01	1,408.01	Sherdyl F to follow up
733.00 USDOT	USDOT EQUITY CONCERNS		5,829.43	
735 MASSCEC/EMPOWER	MA CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY CENTER	45,000.00	45,000.00	Sherdyl F to follow up
742 MON/OSRP	TOWN OF MONTEREY	1,992.65	1,992.65	CJ Hoss to follow up
COOK INSURANCE	CHARLES COOK		190.52	
GAHERTY INSURANCE	LAUREN GAHERTY		569.13	

Report Total

98,097.75 **320,777.72**



Accounts

Current Balance

\$0.00

Available Credit

Amount Due

Payment Due Date



It appears you don't have any recent activity.

When available, this is where your account activity will display.

All available activity has been retrieved. More may be available via date-range search.



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

MALCOLM FICK, Chair
JOHN DUVAL, Vice-Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk
BUCK DONOVAN, Treasurer
THOMAS MATUSZKO, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Committee, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director

DATE: January 26, 2024

SUBJ: Agenda Items – February 1, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting

IV. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to authorize (after the fact) the Executive Director to sign any contracts and agreements with Berkshire Community College related to the BERK12 Mohawk Trail Regional School District project.*

The Executive Committee is requested (after the fact) to authorize the Executive Director to sign any contracts and agreements with Berkshire Community College related to the BERK12 Mohawk Trail Regional School District project. With this grant, BRPC will work with BERK12 to provide data and analysis on the Mohawk Trail – Hawlemont Regional School Districts, including enrollment and projections. The grant runs through July 30, 2024. This grant will provide \$5,000 in funding, with no match required. Mark Maloy, mmaloy@berkshireplanning.org, is the BRPC contact.

B. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) Program in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

The Executive Committee is requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) program and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. The project will build community resilience to address the ongoing loneliness epidemic identified by the Surgeon General through community-led strategies to increase social connectedness, ease navigation of peer and clinical mental health supports, and reduce the use and misuse of alcohol and other substances. The project will focus on Central County, with a particular focus on six historically underserved populations: BIPOC persons, recent immigrants and Spanish speakers, young adults (18-25) not engaged in college full time, LGBTQ+ community members, people in more rural areas, and those experiencing persistent poverty. The primary goals are to reduce the prevalent misuse of alcohol, increase the capacity of community members from the six populations identified to develop

population-specific strategies that increase protective factors, and increase the normalization of both community and clinical mental health support. This \$1,875,000 five-year grant is anticipated to be a collaborative project between BRPC, The Brien Center, Volunteers in Medicine, The City of Pittsfield, and other community partners. There is no match required. Staff leads on this project will be Andy Ottoson, aottoson@berkshireplanning.org, ex. 37, and Nikki Lewis, NLewis@berkshireplanning.org, ex. 35.

C. Vote to Approve Submission of a Grant Application to the US Department of Transportation (DOT) – RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) program *

The Executive Committee is requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application and sign any resulting contracts and agreements to the US DOT RAISE program for the “Adventure Trail to Ashuwillticook: Active Transportation Connecting Berkshire County” application. This application seeks funds to complete planning, design, and permitting as follows:

- Adventure Trail through Williamstown and North Adams, connecting two world-class institutions, the Clark Art Institute and the MASS MoCA
- Ashuwillticook Rail Trail Extension Lime Street in Adams to Hodges Cross Road in North Adams
- Connection between the 5.8-mile Adventure Trail and 1.8-mile Ashuwillticook Rail Trail Extension to 14 miles of the completed Ashuwillticook Rail Trail to Pittsfield, creating a 25-mile, entirely off-road network of accessible paths for pedestrians and cyclists

The total amount requested is estimated at \$10,000,000.00. There is no match required. The staff lead on this project will be Nicholas Russo, Senior Transportation Planner, nrusso@berkshireplanning.org, x19.

D. Vote to Approve Comments in Response to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Request for Comments on the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Review and Stakeholder Questions

The Executive Committee is requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit comments to DOER’s request for comments on the SMART program. The SMART Program is DOER's incentive program established to support the development of solar in Massachusetts as defined in [225 CMR 20.00](#). The tariff-based incentive is paid directly by the utility company to the system owner, following the approval of the application by the Solar Program Administrator and DOER. The DOER is currently conducting a review of the SMART program and is soliciting comments from stakeholders, especially responses to a series of questions. The comment deadline is Friday, February 2, 2024 by 5pm.

E. Vote to Approve Submission of Comments to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy of the Massachusetts General Court regarding Several Legislative Bills Related to Solar Development and Regulation

The Executive Committee is requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit comments to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy regarding several legislative bills related to solar development and regulation as recommended by the Regional Issues Committee. There are several bills before this Joint Committee related to solar development on Commonwealth owned or operated facilities, incentivizing solar projects on built land, and expediting electric decarbonization infrastructure project permitting. The Regional Issues Committee has been discussing these bills with Senator Mark, who is a member of the Joint Committee and has prepared comments. The comments need to be submitted before the bills are acted on by the Joint Committee, no later than February 7, 2024 when all bills are supposed to be acted on by legislative committees.

V. Committee Reports and Discussion

A. Commission Development Committee

This committee met January 4, following the Executive Committee (EC). Two year terms for officers and committee members were recommended for a vote at the January Commission meeting. Ideas for improved public relations and possible education and networking events were discussed. The next meeting is on March 7, following the Executive Committee meeting. Draft unapproved minutes are in this meeting's materials.

B. Municipal Planning Organization (MPO)

The MPO met on January 9. Topics included Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) adjustments and amendments and a presentation on Safety Performance Measure Targets. Draft minutes are in this meeting's materials. The next meeting is February 27.

C. Berkshire Brownfields Committee

The Brownfields Committee met January 18. Environmental site assessment locations in North Adams and Great Barrington were discussed, and four site assessments in Pittsfield (370 Wahconah (former Bel Air Mill), JB Paper Factory, Stetson Cleaners, 100 Woodlawn, Tyler Street, (3 parcels) and two in North Adams (Windsor Mill, Hide Mound/Former Tannery Dump) were approved. Greylock WORKS revolving loan fund application was also approved. Draft minutes are not available.

D. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee met on January 19 and discussed renewable energy bills submitted by Senator Paul Mark and how to proceed with this topic. Draft minutes are not yet available. The next meeting is February 28 at 3:30 pm.

E. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS)

The next CEDS meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2024. The proposed agenda includes a review of a Small Business Resiliency Assessment, 5-year update on Berkshire Blueprint 2.05, and CEDS 2023-2027 Year Progress Report to EDA.

VI. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 12/28/2023 to 01/23/2024.

- Washington – Zoning Recodification - \$3,000
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council – NACCHO Preparedness Summit Funding Award - \$3,420
- University of Baltimore - COCLI - Berkshire Post Overdose Program - \$130,950

Grants and Contracts not received.

At this time, we are not aware of any grants not received.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (B.T.I.) Update

The BTI board approved the FY2023 Treasurer, Buck Donovan, and President, John Duval, to sign the Mass PC form or BTI's 2023 tax return prepared by our accountant, Adelson & Company PC.

C. Staff Update

- Open Positions:
 - Internships - Outdoor Recreation and Arts & Culture Planning
 - Public Health Nurse Educator
 - Senior Planner – Housing
 - Public Health Community Social Worker

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission met on January 12 2024. The major topics were priorities for the Housing Bond Bill hearing, possible topics for the upcoming April 6th MMA Western MA/Rural conference and an update about rural legislative priorities.

E. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) recently announced at their January 16, 2024 Board of Directors meeting, that a consultant was selected in December for planning and conceptual design of the Palmer station. It was also cited that MassDOT's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) identified \$4m for planning and design for the Palmer station.
- Berkshire Flyer - There was no known activity over the last month.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – There was no known activity over the last month.

F. Select Board Handbook

The Massachusetts Select Board Association recently released the [Select Board Handbook](#). Previously prepared as a printed version, this version is a comprehensive on-line guide to the fundamentals of town government covering the full range of roles and responsibilities for Select Board members. Not only is it useful for Select Board members, but others will benefit from the easy to use and understand explanation of the functioning of town governments.

G. Municipal Empowerment Act

The Healy Administration recently filed the Municipal Empowerment Act. This is a wide-ranging bill intended to help increase municipal flexibility, strengthen municipal finances, address municipal workforce challenges, and improve the efficiency of local operations. Among other items, if adopted, it would allow municipalities to increase the local meals and lodging taxes, allow a local-option vehicle excise tax, change procurement thresholds and requirements make permanent a number of popular pandemic-era allowances for remote or hybrid public meetings, outdoor dining permits, and to-go cocktail sales, [Municipal Empowerment Act | Mass.gov](#).

H. Housing Bond Bill

On January 18, 2024, the Massachusetts Legislature held a hearing on the Affordable Homes Act, [Bill H.4138 \(malegislature.gov\)](#) (Housing Bond Bill.) The Western Mass Housing Coalition, which BRPC participates in, submitted written testimony. In addition, BRPC, 1Berkshire, Berkshire Housing, and the Berkshire County Housing Authority submitted joint written comments (attached.)

I. MMA Western and Rural Mass Conference

Please save Saturday morning April 6, 2024 for the MMA Western and Rural Mass Conference being held at the Hotel Northampton, Northampton. This has become an annual

event for local officials to network and learn current information about important matters impacting their communities.

VII. Old Business

A. None

A. New Business

A. Discussion about the March Commission Meeting

The next Full Commission meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2024. Discussion at the last Commission meeting, as well as the Commission Development Committee, suggested using the Commonwealth's recently released Economic Development Plan as a framework for topics at future meetings.

If we don't use that framework, potential items previously mentioned include:

- Micro-transit
- Presentation of ResilientMass Plan
- Presentation on Recommendation of the Climate Chief
- Presentation on the meaning of environmental justice communities



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

MALCOLM FICK, Chair
JOHN DUVAL, Vice-Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk
BUCK DONOVAN, Treasurer
THOMAS MATUSZKO, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

DRAFT Commission Development Committee

Minutes from January 4, 2024

This was a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023, extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until March 31, 2025.

The meeting was held via Zoom and was recorded.
Chair Doug McNally called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

I. Roll call:

Present:

Pedro Pachano, Great Barrington

Malcolm Fick, Great Barrington (non-voting Commission Chair)

Buck Donovan, Lee

Kyle Hanlon, North Adams

Doug McNally, Windsor, Committee Chair

Absent: Sarah Hudson

BRPC Staff: Tom Matuszko, Laura Brennan

II. Introductions were not needed.

III. Approval of Minutes from November 16, 2023

Kyle Hanlon moved to approve the November 16, 2023, minutes; Buck Donovan seconded. Notes were drafted on last year's letterhead, that was corrected. A roll call vote approved it: Doug McNally, Kyle Hanlon, and Buck Donovan. Abstained: Pedro Pachano

IV. 2-year terms for Officers and Committee appointments

Tom started a discussion at the last meeting about changing Officers' and Committee membership appointments to a two-year term for efficiency's sake. No concerns or objections were raised. A two-thirds vote at a full Commission meeting is required to change the bylaws and the proposed changes must be sent to Delegates and Alternates one week prior to the meeting.

Kyle Hanlon made a motion to recommend these proposed bylaw changes at the full Commission meeting, on behalf of the Commission Development Committee. Seconded by Pedro Pachano. Approved by Doug, Pedro, Kyle, and Buck.

V. Networking/Educational Opportunities (5th Thursdays, etc.)

Part of the role of this committee is to provide guidance about networking and educational opportunities.

Doug proposed Economic Development as a theme for the year, using the presentation on the statewide plan as a start and future meetings to “dig deeper” into related topics, such as child care/early learning opportunities. Malcolm noted that housing and transportation are additional topics related to economic development.

The Healy Administration is introducing a lot of initiatives. Those might be good topics for 5th Thursday events. Perhaps a cheaper version than an expensive restaurant dinner, such as a buffet, could be organized.

BRPC staff has advocated for an overall state development plan that connects numerous plans such as rail, climate, farmland, forest, economic development, broadband, and housing. Such a statewide plan has not been developed.

Pedro suggested “the benefit of shared services” or “regionalism” as a topic. Doug noted that Lee and Lenox, and Adams Cheshire and North Adams shot down sharing educational services. Tom said there is a lot of push back on regionalization and suggested successful case studies as the best way to talk about it. Doug suggested discussing the topic indirectly by looking at challenges faced by municipalities, state initiatives, and how to best address and implement them. Tri-Town Health is a working example.

It was agreed to ask at the next Commission meeting if people are interested in attending in-person events.

There are four 5th Thursdays in 2024; only two viable: Feb 29 and May 30.

VI. Outreach and Recruitment

How do we get people engaged and interested? And how do we make sure communities are aware of the work BRPC does?

Per suggestion of Commission members, the Annual Report was mailed to each municipality. Doug suggested an op ed to the Berkshire Eagle on a regular basis highlighting BRPC’s work.

In the past, BRPC had a staff community-liaison program, with a staff member assigned to each community. It could be revived especially as outreach to the communities BRPC is not engaged with.

Tom wants to identify specific community needs so BRPC may be on the lookout for funding, such as a salt shed. This may be a way to introduce BRPC’s services.

It was agreed to reformat meeting emails with the agenda topics in the body

of the email: major topics and this is the business we need you there for *then* the agenda.

It was suggested that Commission members reach out to members who are not participating by phone. Doug volunteered; especially to contact the other "tiny towns." It was agreed to review who is not participating and maybe make assignments for calls at the next meeting.

If two-year terms are approved; the Nominating Subcommittee will have less to do. It was mentioned that the terms could be staggered.

VII. Next meeting

March 7, 2024, 5:00 pm, following the Executive Committee meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

Kyle motioned to adjourn, Pedro seconded. All agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Tuesday, January 9, 2024

Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications

Meeting Materials: <https://berkshireplanning.org/event/berkshire-mpo-meeting/>

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

David Mohler	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt)
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Malcolm Fick	BRPC
Sheila Irvin	BRTA
Mike Nuwallie	City of North Adams
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield
Christine Hoyt	North Subregion Delegate
John Boyle	North Central Subregion Delegate
George McGurn	Southwest Subregion Alternate

Others Present:

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Clete Kus	BRPC
Nick Russo	BRPC
Thomas Matuszko	BRPC
Bob Malnati	BRTA
Ryan Griffis	BRPC
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Joshua Barber	FHWA

I. Call to Order – Introductions

Mr. Mohler called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Meeting attendees introduced themselves via a roll call conducted by Mr. Kus.

II. Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 28, 2023

ACTION: Mr. Morales introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. McGurn, to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2023, MPO meeting.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Abstain
Ms. Irvin:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea

Mr. Nuvallie	Abstain
Mr. Boyle	Abstain
Mr. McGurn	Yea

IV. Consideration of Administrative Adjustments to the 2024 – 2028 TIP

Ms. Koirala continued her explanation from the last meeting on the increased costs and purpose of the proposed amendment and where and how funding would be distributed for the TIP. No action was taken at the previous meeting, and only minor revisions had been made since last time, which Ms. Koirala detailed for attendees. There were no questions.

Ms. Hoyt joined the meeting before the conclusion of voting.

ACTION: Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the administrative adjustments to the 2024-2028 TIP.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Abstain
Ms. Irvin:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Abstain
Mr. Boyle	Abstain
Mr. McGurn	Yea
Ms. Hoyt	Yea

V. Approval of an amendment (Amendment #1) and administrative adjustments to the 2024-2028 TIP for the Transit and Highway sections; authorize the Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO members

Ms. Koirala explained the purposes for this amendment and adjustments. A new highway project value was during the comment period received, reducing project cost by roughly ~\$470,000. Ms. Koirala then explained other adjustments transit sections, including vehicle replacements valued at approximately ~\$450,000 and 2.2 million respectively. There were no questions.

ACTION: Mr. McGurn introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Nuvallie, to approve the administrative adjustments to the 2024-2028 TIP.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Irvin:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea
Ms. Hoyt	Yea
Mr. Boyle	Yea
Mr. McGurn	Yea

VI. Consideration of an amendment (Amendment #2, highway and transit) to the 2024-2028 TIP and authorize a 21 day comment period

Ms. Koirala explained various highway and transit grants funding awarded to BRTA and municipalities for mobility assistance, fleet upgrades and equipment, and vehicle replacement. There were not questions.

ACTION: Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. McGurn, to authorize the release of this amendment for a 21-day public comment period.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Irvin:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea
Ms. Hoyt	Yea
Mr. Boyle	Yea
Mr. McGurn	Yea

VII. Presentation, discussion and action on Safety Performance Measure Targets

Mr. Klem summarized a handout presented to members and available in meeting materials regarding the MassDOT CT24 Safety Performance Measure Targets (PM1). Mr. Klem explained the differences from prior years safety performance measures, as well as similarities and returning features, and its intended goals and measures. Mr. Russo continued the presentation by showing a comparison for Berkshire County against the statewide data, using available data for the region specifically and a similar methodology to MassDOT for creating two-year and four-year data projections.

Mr. Morales asked why separate year targets were the same, and Mr. Russo explained this was because projections of issues related to projections and graphics, but confirmed future projections would be lowered and accurately represented. Mr. Klem confirmed that MassDOT had encountered similar a similar issue and could provide relevant data if requested.

ACTION: Mr. Nuvallie introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. McGurn and Ms. Hoyt, to adopt the statewide safety targets presented.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Irvin:	Abstain
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea
Ms. Hoyt	Yea
Mr. Boyle	Abstain
Mr. McGurn	Yea

VIII. Status reports from Member Agencies

Mr. Moore detailed five projects scheduled for FY 2024 in MassDOT District One and their anticipated timelines.

Ms. Irvin reported that BRTA completed a month of successful free rides and will be further discussing night service and connectivity with the Pioneer Valley and Franklin County at a future meeting.

Mr. Kus commented BRPC is in the signatory process for the Safe Streets for All contract agreement and will have a kickoff meeting in the near future. Future developments for this initiative will be shared with the MPO. As well, preparations for 2025 TIP is underway, and information has been sent to the towns requesting that from communities submit new projects and provide updated information on their existing projects.

IX. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

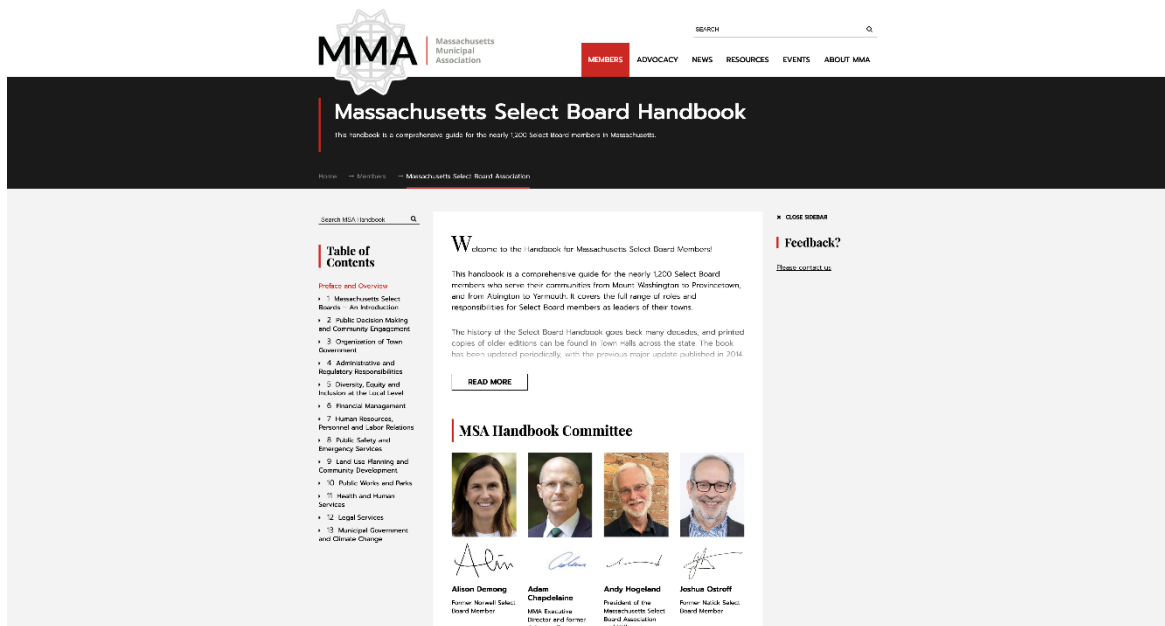
X. Next Meeting date – February 27th, 2024

The next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on February 27th, 2024.

ACTION: Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. McGurn. Mr. Mohler adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- [Agenda](#)
- [BMPO November 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2024-2028 TIP Highway 1st Amendment](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2024-2028 TIP Transit 1st and 2nd Amendment & Adjustment](#)
- [Safety Performance Measure Targets CY24](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)



View the Select Board Handbook

Dear MSA Members,

At the MMA Annual Meeting last week, the Massachusetts Select Board Association launched a [new online version](#) of its comprehensive guide for Select Board members.

The Handbook for Massachusetts Select Board Members, which goes back many decades, was last updated in 2014 and was previously available only in print or as a PDF. The comprehensive resource covers the full range of roles and responsibilities for Select Board members as leaders of their towns.

The new online version, publicly available on the [MMA website](#), has its own navigation tools and built-in search function. The content has been fully updated to reflect changes to laws and regulations, and to include emerging issues such as [diversity, equity and inclusion \(DEI\)](#) and [climate change](#), both of which are covered in new chapters.

Among the advantages of the online version is that it can be updated on an ongoing basis. It also features a [convenient feedback form](#), where users can suggest improvements both to the format and content.

Going forward, MSA members can expect semi-regular emails on major content and formatting updates.

We want to extend our sincere thanks to all those who were involved in this project, and those who are now using it for the first time! We truly hope this new handbook edition will support your work as a select board member and community leader. If you have any questions about this project, please don't hesitate to contact Anneke Craig, MMA Member Program Coordinator, at acraig@mma.org or 617-426-7272, ext. 104.

Thanks,

MSA Handbook Committee

Andrew Hogeland, MSA President and Williamstown Select Board Member

Adam Chapdelaine, MMA Executive Director

Alison Demong, former Norwell Select Board Member

Joshua Ostroff, former Natick Select Board Member

MMA Staff

Candace Pierce, Communications and Membership Director

John Ouellette, Deputy Communications Director

Meredith Gabriliska, Digital Communications Specialist

Anneke Craig, Member Program Coordinator

View the Select Board Handbook

Gov. Healey files Municipal Empowerment Act

Yesterday afternoon, Gov. Maura Healey filed her Municipal Empowerment Act, a wide-ranging bill intended to help increase municipal flexibility, strengthen municipal finances, address municipal workforce challenges, and improve the efficiency of local operations.

The governor, along with Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, first announced the legislation during the MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show in Boston on Jan. 19, and received a strongly enthusiastic response from the 1,000 or so local leaders in the room.

Among its many provisions, the [Municipal Empowerment Act](#) would reform procurement rules and update borrowing rules for school projects; make permanent a number of popular pandemic-era allowances for remote or hybrid public meetings, outdoor dining permits, and to-go cocktail sales; and establish enforcement mechanisms for prohibitions on doubled-up utility poles. It would also allow cities and towns, which face state-imposed caps on local revenue raising, to increase local-option meals and lodging taxes and create a new local-option motor vehicle excise surcharge.

A new commission would be established to take a fresh look at opportunities to address unfunded liabilities from non-pension employee benefits (known as OPEB). And the state would centralize the valuation of telecommunications and utility property, removing a headache for local assessors.

Driscoll said the package is “a direct result” of input from local officials during a listening tour she conducted around the state this past fall, when she heard from more than 130 managers and administrators representing 112 different municipalities, as well as professional associations representing local leaders and employees.

“This package reduces red tape that municipal leaders far too often encounter, and gives them more options to utilize tools that will make their communities stronger,” Driscoll said.

Local leaders were quick to express their support.

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell thanked the administration for a “common-sense effort to help me serve the residents of my city better.” Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove said the legislation “addresses the needs of local government while providing flexibility to do what’s best for each of our communities.” Gardner Mayor Michael Nicholson said the administration “has proposed ways to build a stronger Commonwealth from the street level on up.”

Williamstown Select Board Member Andy Hogeland, president of the Massachusetts Select Board Association called the package “very strong and thoughtful.”

“I particularly appreciate the provisions that demonstrate the administration’s ongoing support for rural towns,” he said, “and for giving all municipalities greater latitude in local control over topics such as a means-tested senior property tax exemption and local-option taxes.”

MMA Executive Director Adam Chapdelaine said local leaders appreciate “that the administration made the concerted effort to listen to municipal officials

across the state about the challenges they face, and then acted on that input with a robust package of very meaningful reforms.”

“The Municipal Empowerment Act will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local government and the delivery of essential services in each one of our communities,” he said. “For a number of years, municipalities have been facing cost increases in key areas that are far outpacing the growth in their revenues, so the opportunity to boost locally generated revenue and remove barriers to efficiency is welcome news.”

Local revenues and procurement

The bill would enable communities, at local option, to increase the local meals tax from 0.75% to 1%, and increase the local lodging tax from 6% to 7% (6.5% to 7.5% in Boston). Currently, 251 municipalities have adopted a local meals tax, and 216 have a local lodging tax. The rate ceilings haven’t changed since the original legislation in 2009.

A new local-option vehicle excise tax surcharge of 5% would be available to all 351 municipalities.

In the area of procurement reforms, the bill would:

- Raise thresholds for competitive bids and remove onerous publishing requirements
- Clarify that Chapter 30B enables groups of cities and towns to award multiple contracts through the request for proposals process and purchase both supplies and services from collectively bid contracts
- Equalize 30B thresholds for advertised procurements to \$100,000 for all municipal purchasing, not just schools
- Eliminate the requirement to publish notice of invitations for competitive bids on COMMBUYS
- Streamline procurement for electric school buses and charging infrastructure by allowing single procurements for both under Chapter 30B

Additional provisions

Additional provisions of the Municipal Empowerment Act would do the following:

- Create a new local-option means-tested property tax exemption for seniors
- Allow cities and towns to amortize emergency deficit spending over three years
- Modernize annual town report printing requirements
- Expand the process for seeking exemptions to post-retirement employment rules
- Allow regional boards of assessors
- Enable cities to form Veterans' Districts
- Equalize the rules for property tax appeals (among residents and commercial taxpayers)
- Permit more efficient setting of revolving fund spending caps
- Close unemployment insurance loopholes
- Simplify election cost reimbursements from the state
- Make it easier to accept and expend gifts and grants
- Improve notification and response of cybersecurity incidents
- Provide an option for municipalities to adopt a one-year override for non-capital expenditures
- Have the Massachusetts Department of Transportation provide grant application assistance
- Establish a working group to examine the administration of the Chapter 90 local road and bridge repair program

To help address local workforce challenges, the administration announced its intent to recapitalize the Local Finance Commonwealth Fellowship at \$500,000, and to provide \$500,000 to create a new program with the Collins Center for Public Management at UMass Boston focused on generating a pipeline of qualified individuals for high-demand municipal positions.

Written by [John Ouellette, MMA Deputy Communications Director](#)





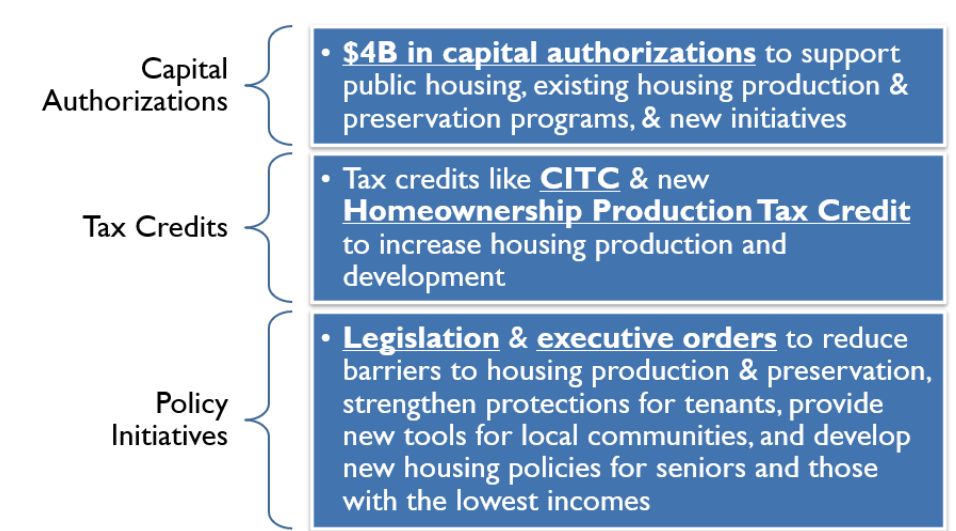
Affordable Homes Act – Overview

Healey-Driscoll Administration

Introduction

The Affordable Homes Bill is the largest housing investment of its kind in Massachusetts history, designed to meet the moment and meaningfully impact the supply of housing in the state. Today, too many Massachusetts families are struggling under the burden of rising housing costs and limited housing availability. Across the state, the supply of housing has failed to keep up with demand. Between 2020 and 2030, the state needs at least 200,000 new homes to accommodate growth and achieve a healthy vacancy rate; currently only 1.6% of housing units are available for sale or rent. The state's high housing costs are disproportionately burdening low-income households. Sixty-four percent of renters earning less than \$35,000 – the equivalent of 200,000 households – spend half their income on housing. At the same time, homeownership is increasingly out of reach for many, especially Black and Latinx communities, for which homeownership rates are *half* those of White communities.

Meeting this moment requires bold initiatives that support the Healey-Driscoll Administration's goals of affordable and abundant housing– that is exactly what the Affordable Homes Act does. This more than \$4 billion bill is a comprehensive package of spending, policy, and programmatic actions and is more than two times as large as the next largest housing bond bill.



Taken together, the bill supports the creation of more than 40,000 homes that otherwise would not have been built. The bill will also preserve, rehab, improve, or support more than 27,000 existing units, including improvements to over 7,000 public housing units and the decarbonization of 3,000 public housing units. These proposed investments are designed to impact those who need support the most. More than 80% of the bond authorizations in the bill

Affordable Homes Act – Overview

will benefit low-income households, with up to 50% of proposed authorizations benefiting Extremely Low-Income (ELI) households or residents with disabilities.

Historic Investments in Public Housing

The Affordable Homes Act includes ground-breaking investments in public housing, which plays a vital role in housing vulnerable populations, with more than half of the units occupied by extremely low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. Specifically, the bill includes **\$1.6B to make long overdue investments in maintenance, accessibility, and resilience for one-quarter of the state’s public housing portfolio**. This funding includes **\$1.5B for the Public Housing Capital Fund** to support the repair, rehabilitation, and modernization of public housing units across the state, with **\$150M dedicated to the decarbonization of public housing units** through the installation of heat pumps and electric utilities. The bill also includes **\$100M for the Public Housing Mixed Income Demonstration Program**, which supports Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) who partner with developers to add mixed-income developments on LHA land, leveraging funds to maintain and preserve public housing while increasing the overall housing supply.

Driving Development

The Affordable Homes Act also includes **\$1.83 billion** in funding to help drive housing production and preservation in Massachusetts. Among the many investments and policy proposals included in the bill are:

- **\$425M for the Housing Stabilization and Investment Fund** to support preservation, new construction, and rehabilitation projects.
- **\$175M for the HousingWorks Infrastructure Program** to fund municipal infrastructure projects to encourage denser housing development.
- **\$100M for the Public Housing Mixed-Income Housing Demonstration Program** to support Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) who partner with developers to add mixed-income developments on LHA land.
- **\$100M for Commonwealth Builder** to spur construction of affordable homeownership opportunities in Gateway Cities and other similar markets.
- **\$50M for the Momentum Fund**, a pioneering initiative designed to leverage state resources to support large scale, mixed-income multifamily development.

Affordable Homes Act – Overview

- **Making the Community Investment Tax Credit Program permanent and increasing it from \$12M to \$15M** per year to support the critical work of Community Development Corporations.
- **Creating a new Homeownership Tax Credit** designed to produce homes affordable to first-time homebuyers earning not more than 120% area median income (AMI).

Supporting our Most Vulnerable Residents and Increasing Housing Opportunities

The Affordable Homes Act includes investments that **will directly fund the creation of approximately 22,000 new affordable housing units**, more than 4,000 of which will be reserved for ELI households. The bill will also **support roughly 12,000 additional units of middle-income housing**. Additionally, the bill authorizes several hundreds of millions of dollars estimated to **create up to 1,900 new home ownership opportunities**. Significant investments include:

- **\$800M for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**, which will provide flexible resources to create or preserve affordable housing for households whose incomes are not more than 110% of AMI.
- **\$200M for the Housing Innovations Fund** to support innovative and alternative forms of rental housing for people experiencing homelessness, housing for seniors and veterans, and transitional units for persons recovering from substance abuse.
- **\$100M for Middle-Income Housing** to support housing development for households earning up to 120% AMI and improve home ownership opportunities.
- **\$70M for the Facilities Consolidation Fund (FCF)**, which supports the development of appropriate community-based housing for Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Developmental Services (DDS) clients.
- **\$55M for Community Based Housing (CBH)**, which supports appropriate housing for people with disabilities who are not clients of DMH or DDS.
- **Establishes a Supportive Housing Pool Fund** to provide critical assistance for supportive housing by funding staffing, case management, service coordination and other tenancy-related services not funded through other sources.

Climate-Focused Investments

The Clean Energy and Climate Plan calls for a 35% reduction in residential building energy use by 2030. To support that goal, the bill includes **\$275M for Sustainable and Green Housing Initiatives**, which supports the creation and preservation of transit-oriented housing and sustainable and climate-resilient affordable multifamily housing. The authorization also creates a new, innovative program to accelerate and unlock new housing through, for example, office conversions and development of modular homes. This investment is **on top of the \$150M** included within the public housing capital program for decarbonization efforts. The bill also supports the Administration's "whole of government" approach to meeting state climate goals by directing that all state housing investments prioritize and incorporate the state's climate and decarbonization goals to the maximum extent feasible.

Continuing the Healey-Driscoll Commitment to Confronting the Housing Crisis

Since its first day in office, the Healey-Driscoll Administration has signaled its commitment to confronting the Commonwealth's housing crisis. The Affordable Homes Act builds on the previous actions and investments the Administration has taken to drive more abundant and affordable housing across the state.

This year alone, Governor Healey, alongside the newly created Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, has awarded over \$300 million in state and federal resources to accelerate projects that seek to build and preserve over 2,000 affordable housing units. The Administration's FY24-FY28 Capital Investment Plan also represented an historic investment in housing, increasing the annual investment in housing by approximately 18% to help finance the construction of hundreds of new affordable housing opportunities per year. The Administration is further committed to more efficiently leveraging state volume cap as a tool to increase housing; it is currently working on implementing volume cap strategies that further Administration goals in 2024.

The fiscal year 2024 state budget also makes historic investments in housing, with **\$1.07 billion** in funding for key programs that **combat homelessness** and **support housing affordability**, including:

- **\$190M for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition** to help households avoid eviction and possibly homelessness.
- **\$110M for Homeless Individual Shelters**, which will preserve over 2,600 shelter beds for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Affordable Homes Act – Overview

- **\$107M for Subsidies for Public Housing Authorities**, critical funding to maintain the operations of our state-funded public housing.
- **\$16.5M for the Rental Subsidy Program for DMH Clients**, which will help expand access to safe, affordable housing for clients at DMH.
- **\$8.9M for Sponsor-Based Permanent Supportive Housing** to help reduce chronic homelessness.
- **Creates 750 new rental vouchers through the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)**, including project-based vouchers which are instrumental to the development of affordable housing.
- **Increases the benefit level at HomeBASE to \$30,000 over 24-months** to help EA-eligible families exiting family shelter.
- **Authorizes the creation of project-based vouchers through the Alternative Housing Voucher Program** to help the development of accessible housing for non-elderly disabled individuals.

And the **tax reform package** recently signed into law included numerous provisions designed to drive housing production and address the high cost of housing, including:

- **Raising the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit** annual authorization from \$40M to \$60M to spur the creation of at least 3,300 new units of affordable housing annually.
- **Increasing the statewide cap on the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP)** to create an estimated 12,500 new homes in Gateway cities.
- **Creating a local option property tax exemption for affordable housing.**
- **Increasing the rental deduction cap** from \$3,000 to \$4,000.

TO: Joint Committee on Housing

FROM: Jonathan Butler, President & CEO 1Berkshires

Brad Gordon, Executive Director, Berkshires County Regional Housing Authority

Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director, Berkshire County Regional Planning

Eileen Peltier, CEO & President, Berkshire Housing

DATE: January 12, 2024

RE: Joint Meeting on Housing Bond Bill Written Testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on H.4138, *The Affordable Homes Act*. On behalf of our organizations, we offer the following testimony focusing on specific impacts and opportunities of the bill for the Berkshires. We also support the written testimony submitted by the Western Massachusetts Housing Coalition of which we are all members.

As one of the most rural and least populated counties in the Commonwealth as well as being a significant tourist and second homeowner destination, Berkshire County has a set of challenges that are important to consider relative to a range of initiatives set forth in the proposed bill. . Berkshire County, like the entire Commonwealth, has a significant housing shortage. In recent years, we have experienced substantial outside investment in the region's rental housing stock, resulting in increased rents and reduced affordability as well as rising home prices and limited stock for sale. The area's related low vacancy rates have also impacted availability and affordability, especially for low- and moderate-income household, with those at the lowest end of the economic spectrum being the most negatively impacted.

Set forth below are five specific recommendations for your consideration:

Homeownership Tax Credit and Commonwealth Builder Program

We support the continued funding of both of these tools for affordable homeownership development, a critical need in the Berkshires. Smaller projects are needed in rural communities; however, these communities are unable to access these funds due to the CommonWealth Builder Program availability only in Gateway Cities as well as both programs having a 10-unit minimum. Eliminating the unit minimum and expanding beyond Gateway Cities would allow for the development of these smaller or right sized projects in rural communities. Adding rehab as a specific eligible use will also allow the older homes that proliferate the county and that need deeper investment to be brought up to code and placed back into the region's housing supply. As we watch homeownership affordability disappear through second homeowner and remote worker acquisitions, we are deeply concerned that affordable homeownership across the county will no longer be a viable option for many residents in Berkshire County. Access to these tools will substantially mitigate that dire outcome.

Seasonal Communities Designation

We support the creation of a Seasonal Communities Designation and Committee to address the unique challenges and opportunities the dynamics in these communities present. We strongly recommend that at least one member of the committee be from Berkshire County. There are commonalities between the Cape and Islands and the Berkshires, but there are also significant differences. For example, the transfer fee as proposed (portion of sale price over \$1 million) would rarely be available in the Berkshires. With that said, we also request a change to the currently proposed language that allows for a transfer fee on the total transaction for sales over \$750,000 or the county median sales price for a single-family home when the median sales price is below \$750,000. A more flexible standard would ensure greater availability of resources across a broader spectrum of communities in the county.

HDIP (Housing Development Incentive Program)

In communities like the Berkshires, the cost of housing development is not significantly less than development in Boston. However, the wages for most of the region's tenants are significantly lower, creating an incongruence between the cost of development and potential income derived from a project or development. In other words, in our region, rental projects do not typically pencil out. This economic dynamic makes it extremely difficult for developers to access private capital. Pittsfield, our only Gateway City, has been very effective at utilizing HDIP to develop rental housing and overcome the challenges. The expansion of HDIP to include the entire county would allow for similar development in other Berkshire Communities where there are substantial workforce housing needs. Not only are employers unable to hire, but the lack of workforce housing also puts upward pressure on rents across the county, reducing affordability in the region's rental portfolio.

Investing in State-Aided Public Housing

There are ten housing authorities located in Berkshire County, nine of which own and manage state-aided public housing units. Most of these units were built between thirty and sixty years ago, and almost all of them are desperately in need of significant capital investment to ensure their ongoing viability and availability. These units house some of our most vulnerable residents, including extremely low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled. Many of these developments were designed in a manner that makes it difficult to impossible to age in place without substantial investments in modifications, such as elevator systems. Investment in public housing is one of the most cost-effective strategies for promoting affordable housing and preventing homelessness in the Berkshires as well as the rest of the Commonwealth.

Accessory Delling Units (ADU's) By-Right Statewide

Allowing accessory dwelling units (ADU's) to be built by-right in single family zoning districts, which is similar to the approach that has been implemented with a great success in California, would provide the uniformity and clarity needed to launch more development of these units in Berkshire County and across the Commonwealth. These units would address a wide range of needs for Berkshire County households, including seniors that are over-housed and the related lack of adequately sized housing for families, as well as housing for those with disabilities. It would provide relatively affordable housing and additional potential income for low- and moderate-income homeowners, allowing a range of Berkshire County households to access housing or remain housed.

In closing, we are highly supportive of the Affordable Homes Act. The proposed legislation provides the resources required to address our unprecedented housing crisis. We believe it should be fully funded and passed quickly. The Berkshires will be ready to maximize the use of the opportunities within the Affordable Homes Act and we as a region look forward to addressing the many housing challenges our neighbors face each and every day.

Thank you for your work on behalf of all Massachusetts citizens and for your consideration of our requests.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates,
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director

DATE: January 26, 2024

RE: **December 2023 Assistance Activities**

This report highlights technical assistance provided by BRPC staff for December 2023. This assistance was in response to requests identified in the Board/Organization column. If available and permitted by the funding agencies, responses were supported by local assessment or grant funds. This report aims to inform municipal officials about how local assessment funds are used and indicate the types of local and technical assistance BRPC can provide. If assistance may be useful to your community, please feel free to contact us for details.

Town/City/State	Municipal Technical Assistance	Board/Organization
Dalton	Dalton Division Road	Select Board and MassDOT D1
Egremont	Housing planning	Affordable Housing Trust
Savoy	Grants, and road and culvert assessments	Select Board
Savoy	Shared town administrator	Planning Board
Savoy	Zoning materials and training	Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board
Sheffield	Scenic Mountain Act map updates	Conservation Commission
Windsor	Zoning and subdivision regulations	Planning Board